



A Brief History of Buddhism in Tibet

Ushnish Tara Tuladhar

Central Department of Buddhist Studies
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur

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Corresponding Author: drsthapa5721@gmail.com, Copyright 2024© Author/s and the Publisher

Abstract

According to Tibetan Buddhist history, there is a legend that Buddhism was first introduced in Tibet in the 4th century A.D. in the reign of King Lha Thothori gNyan bTsan. However, historians claims that Buddhism entered at the time of King Srong-btsan-sgam-po in the 7th century A.D. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the major historical occurrences that shaped Tibetan Buddhism. The aim of the paper is to examine how Buddhism was introduced to Tibet during the seventh century. Through an analysis of relevant literature, I intend to shed light on the development of Buddhism throughout the centuries. Buddhism took its roots during the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan in the 8th century A.D. At this time, Samye, the first Buddhist monastery, and the first Buddhist order were established in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhism was developed after the arrival of the great Buddhist tantric, Padmasambhava. Till today, Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tantric/ Esoteric Buddhism) are practiced in Tibetan Buddhism. Although King Lang Dar-ma (9th century A.D.) tried to eliminate Buddhism from Tibet, it was purified in the 11th century A.D. by the efforts of the great Indian Master Atisa Dipankar Srijnana. Another important event in Tibetan Buddhist History was the formulation of Tibetan Buddhist Canon, Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur in 11th century A.D. Ultimately several Buddhist sects and sub-sects became established in Tibetan Buddhism based on teachings of different Buddhist Masters. Reincarnation of Karmapa, Shamarpa, Dalai Lama, and Panchen Lama is institutionalized in Tibetan Buddhism.

Keywords: Vajrayana, Tibetan Buddhism, Ordination, Incarnation, Living Buddha

Introduction

Buddhism entered Tibet only after the introduction of Buddhism in South Asian countries like Sri Lanka, China, Korea and Japan (Sankrityayan, 1991). Buddhist missionaries from India had approached Tibet during the reign of King Lha Thothori in 4th century A.D. (Roerich, 38; Bell, 33). According to historical account of Tibet, Buddhism was introduced in the 7th century A.D. during the reign of King Srong-btsan-sgam-po. During this time, the Sambhota script was developed and various Sanskrit texts were translated into the Tibetan language and script. But it was in the 8th century A.D. during the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan that Buddhism was firmly established with the arrival of the well-known Buddhist masters Shantarakshita, Padmasambhava, and Kamalashila of Nalanda University from India. Padmasambhava, a tantric teacher, defeated anti-Buddhist elements in Tibet and established Buddhism, which came to be known as 'Tibetan Buddhism'. Though the King Lang Dar-ma of 9th century A.D., anti-Buddhist persecuted Buddhists and tried to eliminate Buddhism. However, in 11th century A.D., after the arrival of Buddhist Master Atisha Dipankara, Buddhism was restored to its original form. After Atisha's death, his disciples founded the Kadampa sect based on the teachings of their master. Drom Tonpa was the chief disciple of Atisha, he is credited with founding the Kadampa School.

Several Buddhist traditions and sub-traditions had been developed in Tibet on the basis of different Buddhist Master's teachings. Nyingma-pa, Sakya-pa, Kagyu-pa and Gelu-pa are the prominent sects among them. Notably, the Tibetan Canonical Literatures Bkha-hgyur, and the Bstan-hgyur were developed in 11th century A.D. (Bapat, 81). Despite the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet in the seventh century, indigenous Tibetan religious practices continued to exert a profound influence on Tibetan society. This study aims to investigate the ways in which renowned Tibetan kings and famed Buddhist masters contributed to the formation of Tibetan Buddhism through religious syncretism.

Methodology

The research methodology of this paper is focused mostly on historical texts. I focused on tracing the historical development of Buddhism in Tibet as well as the contributions of several great rulers and prominent Buddhist masters. The data for this study was a review and analysis of the scholarly literature using the qualitative method. Additionally, the political and social environment of the time is studied to understand the development of Buddhism in Tibet. This study focuses on the period from the seventh century to the present, highlighting major developments and events.

Introducing Buddhism

During the 6th century B.C., Gautama Buddha disseminated his teachings for forty-five years. After his *Mahāparinirvāna*, his followers monks and nuns, continued preaching the Buddha's teachings. During 3rd century B.C., Emperor Asoka of India promoted the spread of Buddhism across Asian countries. He sent Buddhist missionaries to distant regions such as Kashmir, Gandhara, Himalayas, the land of the Yona (present-day Greece), Maharashtra, Suvannabhumi (present-day Thailand/Myanmar), and Sri Lanka. During this period, his son, Bhikkhu Mahinda and daughter Bhikkhuni Sanghamitra were sent to Sri Lanka. Buddhism entered China around the 3rd century A.D., Korea in 372 A.D., Japan in 538 A.D., but in Tibet, it was introduced only in 580 A.D. (Sankrityayan, 1991, 1). According to Tibetan source, Buddhist missionaries from India had approached Tibet in the reign of King Lha Thothori in 4th century A.D. (Roerich, 38; Bell, *Religion of Tibet*, 33; Bapat, 73-74).

As mentioned in The Blue Annals, Buddhist books are supposed to have fallen from Heaven and were worshiped. Roerich mentions that instead of this Bon belief, it is said that those books had been brought to Tibet by the Pandita Budhirakshita and the translator Li-these (38). This was the first, Buddhist texts reached in Tibet (Bell, 33; Thondup, 4). Though the books had in Tibet, nobody was there to write, read them, and explain the meaning (Roerich, 38; Bell, 1968, 33). About 200 years later, in the 7th century, Buddhism was introduced again in the reign of Tibetan Empire under King Srong-btsan-sgam-po. At the age of thirteen, he became the King of Tibet in 642 A.D. and made Lhasa his capital (Bell, 1968, 34). The King built a palace on the red hill which is now known as the Potala Palace of Dalai Lama today. Srong-btsan-sgam-po was known to be intelligent, brave and ambitious. His armies conquered Upper Burma and Western China and expanded the borders of his country (Bell, 1997, 25). Realizing that the people of his country were uneducated, the King sent a team of 16 men to study epigraphy, phonetics, and grammar in India under the leadership of Thonmi Sambhota, a brilliant member of his court. After completing his studies, he created the Tibetan alphabet (Roerich, 39). Additionally, he translated several Buddhist texts into Tibetan and developed the basic grammar books for the Tibetan language, which led to the creation of the first Tibetan literary works and translations (Thondup, 4). King Srong-btsan-sgam-po also learned script and grammar for four years.

He then married princesses of Nepal and China which were rich in Buddhist civilization and culture. Bhrikuti, the Princess of Nepal, brought with her images of Akshobhya Buddha, Maitreya Buddha and Tara. Wenchen, the Princess of China brought the image of Sakyamuni Buddha. These two queens were credited to spread Buddhism in Tibet (Bell, 1968, 34; Thondup, 4). Princess Wenchen built a temple known as the 'Ramoche Temple' in the Northern part of Lhasa to establish the statue which she brought with her.

Later, the king built a beautiful temple in the middle of Lhasa to keep the images brought by Princess Bhrikuti, which is called 'Jokhang Temple' in the present day (Acarya, 39). In addition, the King established numerous meditative hermitages and viharas, promoting virtuous living among the Tibetan people (Roerich, 40).

In this time, many scholars translated a large number of Buddhist texts into Tibetan. He invited scholars from India, Nepal and China. Indian Scholar Kumar, Nepali scholar Shilamanju, Kashmiri Tuna, Chinese Monk Mahadeva, Thonmi and his student Dharmakosh translated Sanskrit Buddhist texts in Tibetan language and script. It is said that Thonmi had translated *Kārandavyuha Sūtra*, *Ratnamegha Sūtra* and *Karmasatak* (Sankrityayan, 1991, 6). So, it can be assumed that Mahayana Buddhism was introduced in Tibet during this time. Srong-btsan-sgam-po is said to have died at the age of 82. He is revered as an incarnation of *Avalokiteśvara* (*Chen-re-zi* in Tibetan), the Lord of Mercy, patron deity of Tibet (Bell, 1968, 34). Even after the great King Srong-btsan-sgam-po's death, his descendants continued to practice Buddhism. His great grandson Tri-de Tsuk-ten translated many Buddhist texts, and '*Suvarna Prabhāsottama*' was the main one among them. He also invited Buddhist monks from Ladakh and China as well.

The Rise of Buddhism

Before Buddhism arrived in Tibet, the native Tibetan religion called Bon was widely practiced (Bell, 1968, 8). Bon is the indigenous religious tradition of Tibet which included shamanistic and animistic practices. Although King Srong-btsan-sgam-po founded Buddhism in Tibet, the Bon religion still had influence on the Tibetan society.

It was only in the 8th century that rise of Buddhism accelerated during the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan (719-780 A.D.), the 5th successor of King Srong-btsan-sgam-po (Sankrityan, 1990, 200). Even though he had a powerful minister named Mazhang, who was anti-Buddhism, the King invited famed monks and scholars from India to preach Buddhism in Tibet (Bell, 1968, 35). At the invitation of the King, the scholar Shantarakshita reached Lhasa and he spent ten months in the palace, giving sermons on the doctrines of Ten Virtues, the Eighteen Elements, and Dependent Origination (the Chain of Causal Phenomena). The King became a disciple of Shantarakshita (Sankrityan, 1968, 10). But during this time, Tibet was suddenly affected by natural disasters like thunderstorms which lead to spread of epidemics, sickness and deaths. Opponents of Buddhism blamed Shantarakshita for all this. People claimed that his sermons had angered the local gods. In order to protect him, the King sent Shantarakshita to Nepal (Roerich 43; Bell, *Religion of Tibet*, 36). After leaving Tibet, Shantarakshita lived in Nepal for six years, from 743 to 749. Many Tibetans came to visit him while he was in Nepal and received teachings from him.

Due to the presence of Buddhist scholars in Nepal at that time, Buddhism became more widespread in the region. Before departing Tibet, Shantarakshita advised the King to invite the Indian scholar Padmasambhava, a great Tantrik teacher with magical powers, to purify the Tibetan soil of evil spirits. Padmasambhava arrived in Nepal in 743 AD (Ram, 41). He spent four years before journeying to Tibet in 747 (Pradhan 118; 55). During his time in Nepal, Padmasambhava is credited with the creation of Tibetan Buddhism, a synthesis of the ancient Bon religion and original Buddhism.

Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) suppressed and vanquished antibuddhist demons and evil spirits from Tibet with his spiritual powers and performed miracles. So, he had gained great popularity. He is still considered to be the second Buddha (Pradhan, 163). Under the influence of Padmasambhava, a unique kind of Buddhism developed in Tibet, which was a combination of Tibet's indigenous religion, Buddhist philosophy and Tantric Buddhism, which came to be known as Tibetan Buddhism. Nyingmapa tradition is also called as 'Yellow Hat Sect' by the foreigners.

During King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan's reign, Samye Monastery, believed to be the oldest in Tibet, was built 50 miles southeast of Lhasa, and followed the model of Odantapuri Vihara, India. There are different ideas exist on who built the Samye Monastery. One idea suggests Padmasambhava founded Samye Monastery in 749 A.D. as the first large monastery in Tibet (Bell, 1968, 37). Another claim is that, it was commissioned by King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan himself under the leadership of Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava, and it was completed in 779 A.D. (Furen and Wenqing 28). According to Sankrityana, Shantarakshita is credited with it (Sankrityayan, 1991, 12). Nevertheless, the first monastery was built during the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan.

Seven Tibetans took ordination in Samye Monastery. They were supposed to be first Buddhist monks in Tibet. According to the Buddhist rules, one can become a monk in the Sangha, a Buddhist order in the presence of five senior monks. There must be at least four monks in Buddhist order, so Shantarakshita invited 12 monks from *Sarvāstivāda* tradition from Nalanda University in India for ordination (Sankrityayan, 1991, 11). It is believed to be the first Buddhist Order in Tibet. This tradition is continued in Tibet to this day and this is how Buddhism took roots in Tibet.

The Samye monastery includes a main temple, twelve small temples, four large stupas, and 108 smaller stupas. Buddhism developed at this monastery and spread throughout all of Tibet. The king sent invitations to many distinguished Indian Pandits, who translate Buddhist Sanskrit Sutras and Tantras into Tibetan. It is believed that by the miraculous

power of Guru Rinpoche, several Tibetan texts have been brought from different lands and translated into Tibetan (Thondup, 9).

Thus, Buddhism in Tibet was established through the collaborative efforts of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan and two renowned Buddhist masters, Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava. However, misinterpretations of Buddhism by Chinese monks resulted in conflicts among scholars. The resolution of this conflict was facilitated by the intervention of Kamalshila, a distinguished scholar and disciple of Shantarakshita, who had traveled through Nepal en route to Tibet. While residing in Nepal, Kamalshila wrote a commentary on Shantarakshita's philosophical treatise, *Tattva Sangraha*, which had a significant impact on Nepalese Buddhism (Ram, 52).

At the age of 68, King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan died, leaving a powerful Buddhist Kingdom. He believed to be the incarnation of Manjushri, embodying the wisdom of all Buddhas (Bapat, 76). After death of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan, his successor Mu-ne btsan-po became the King of Tibet, who was also a religious king. Seeing that the people in their country were poor, he tried to bring economic equality with good intentions but poor planning. The king distributed wealth from royal funds to his people, aiming to eradicate poverty, but it did not succeed. His actions offended the people and his own family, which led to him being killed with poison by members of his own family (Sankrityayana, 1990, 16).

After Mu-ne-btsan-po, his brother Khri-Ide-srong-btsan became the King. He also had faith in Buddhism and gave patronage to monks. Their social status was high and some monks were even appointed as ministers. During this period, many Sanskrit Buddhist texts were translated into Tibetan, and the first Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary, '*Mahāvvyutpatti*' was published (Bapat, 77).

After King Khri-Ide-srong-btsan's death, his descendent Ral-pa-chan (816-838 A.D.), also known as Khri-gtsug-Ide-btsan was enthroned in Tibet. He had an elder brother named Lang-dar-ma but he was spoiled and known for his ill deeds, so Ral-pa-chan was made to take the throne. King Ral-pa-chan had great reverence towards Buddhism. Monks were also given administrative authority in the kingdom. The entire administration of the capital Lhasa was in the hands of a monk named Ban-de-chen-po, who handled all political affairs (Furen and Wenqing, 34).

The King formulated a rule that a person admitted to monkhood should be supported by seven households. He also laid down a law that anyone who looked at a monk with bad intent will be executed. King Ral-pa-chan is regarded as the third great royal protector

of religion (Bapat, 77). He paid obeisance to monks and built numerous temples and monasteries.

But his blind faith towards Buddhism leads to many incompetent people becoming monks, giving a bad name to the King and Buddhism in general. Finally, his brother, Lang-dar-ma conspired with the opponents of Buddhism and killed Ral-pa-chan, becoming the king. He was the last 'Dharma king' of Tibet. In Tibetan history Srong-btsan-sgam-po, Khri-srong-Ide-btsan and Ral-pa-chan has been regarded as the three great Dharma Kings.

Decline of Buddhism

King Lang-dar-ma, an anti-Buddhist and Bon follower, attempted to eradicate Buddhism in Tibet. He forced some monks to marry and those who were not ready to leave the monkhood were forced to become hunters with bows and arrows. Those who disobeyed were executed. Eventually, temples and monasteries were closed down and Buddhist statues and scriptures were destroyed. The Buddhist doctrine disappeared (Roerich, 53). When Lang Dar-ma's atrocities became unbearable, a monk disguised himself and shot the king with an arrow. He appears to have tried to push Buddhism to a dead end. (Acarya, 45).

Thus, Buddhism had developed in the 8th-9th century, but the kings after Khri-srong-Ide-btsan seem to have blind faith towards Buddhism. This is seen by the behaviors of Mu-ne btsan-po and Ral-pa-chan, whose activities degraded Buddhism in the eyes of the Tibetan people and gave rise to Buddhist opponents. From the Buddhist perspective, Tibet remained in darkness for about 150 years starting from the time of Lang-dar-ma.

Revival of Buddhism

Although Buddhism had deteriorated in Tibet in the early 11th century A.D., people's reverence for Buddhism had not completely ceased in their mind. Numerous people continued to practice Buddhism (Furen and Wenqing, 48). During this period, many Buddhist schools flourished in Bengal, Nepal and Kashmir with monks considered high intellectuals. On the other side, condition of Buddhism in Tibet was deteriorating. The monks stopped studying Buddhist texts and did not follow the Vinaya.

All this changed thanks to the efforts of Ye-shes-'od (also known as Jnanaprabha), who was a monk in Western Tibet and slowly revived Buddhism in Tibet. He sent Twenty-one Tibetan scholars to study Buddhism in India. But the climate of India was not suitable for Tibetans causing 19 of the 21 to fall ill and die there, and only two returned to Tibet. This led Ye-shes-'od to the conclusion that it would be better to invite an Indian scholar to Tibet and preach rather than send Tibetans to study in India. He invited the great scholar Atisa (known as Dipankara Srijnana) from Vikramasila Monastery, to disseminate Buddhism. He

is recognized to be one of the greatest figures of Buddhism. Atisa came to Tibet in 1042 A.D. and remained there until his death (Tulku and Mullin, ix). Before proceeding to Tibet, Atisa visited Nepal in 1041 and spent one year (Locke, 410). It is mentioned that King Anantakirti of Nepal welcomed him and at the request of Atisa, the king built a Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra (Thambahī), also known as *Bhagawān Bahā*, and made his son Padmaprabha a monk under the guidance of Atisa. In addition to composing his famous book *Carya-Samgraha-Pradīpa* in Nepal, Atisa preached Buddhism in various places in the valley (Pradhan, 137).

In Tibet, Atisa preached based upon '*Yogacārā*' doctrine whose main message was compassion and wisdom. During his stay in Tibet, he composed many Buddhist texts and translated Sanskrit text into Tibetan as well. Tulku & Mullin further said that among them, he composed *Lam-Don, or Light on the Stages in Spiritual Practice* (Skt. *Bodhi-patha-pradīpam*), a masterpiece of Atisa. After former King Lang Dar-ma, several proclaimed masters misinterpreted the meaning of Tantra, and the monastic practice of celibacy was endangered. He eliminated wrong understanding of Tantras and spread the true doctrine. He enforced celibacy upon the monks, the practice of '*Bodhicitta*' and discouraged magic practices. Thus, the real Buddhism spread again through Tibet.

After translating religious reforms and texts in the last thirteen years of his life, Atisa passaway in Tibet at the age of 73. He is still revered by Tibetans to be the second Buddha. Thus, there was a renaissance in Buddhism in Tibet due to Atisa. Subsequently, his Tibetan disciple Brom-ston founded Bkah-gdams-pa school based on Atisa's teaching. Afterwards the Gelupa school emerged from Bkah-gdams-pa sect in the 14th century.

Major Traditions of Tibetan Buddhism

Several Buddhist sects appeared in Tibetan Buddhism with the arrival of different teachers. Tibetan Buddhist sects focus on particular lineages of teachings from master to disciple. There are four main traditions in existence today, along with many sub-schools. Among them, the four major sects are: Nyingmapa, Kagyupa, Sakyapa and Gelupa (Gethin, 270-271).

Nyingma Tradition

It has been said that Padmasambhava, a Vajrayana master and Indian Tantric master, founded Nyingma Sect in the ninth century during the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan (Thondup 7; Gethin 270). He had Twenty-five principal disciples (Bajracharya, 75). It is assumed that the incarnation of these 25 disciples continues the Nyingma lineage. It is believed that Padmasambhava hid physical objects such as hundreds of scriptures, images and ritual implements that were buried in the ground, hidden in water or in trees or sky throughout Tibet

and in some places of Nepal. These items became known as 'hidden treasures'. He also left the precise instructions to reveal these treasures for the benefit of future generations. These hidden teachings are known as the 'Terma'. The Terma tradition is particularly prevalent in, and important to, the Nyingma lineage. A person who is the discoverer Terma is called 'Terton' (Thondup, 15). Many tertons are considered to be incarnations of the twenty-five main disciples of Padmasambhava. A hundred masters have revealed these treasures and taught them to their disciples. Nyingmapa tradition has been prevalent in Tibetan Buddhism since its early spread, continues to be practiced by most Tibetan today.

In Nyingmapa, system of teaching there are six levels of Tantras the Three Outer Tantras and The Three Inner Tantras. Kriyā Tantra, Caryā Tantra, and Yoga Tantra are the Three Outer Tantras. The Mahā-Yoga, Anu-Yoga, and Ati-Yoga are the Three Inner Tantras (Thondup, 20-21). Nine different vehicles are preserved in the Nyingma. The first three are the traditional forms of the disciple, solitary buddha, and bodhisattva; the second three are lower tantric practices; and the last three are the highest tantric practices, also known as *Nyingmapa Dzogs-chen* or "great fulfillment," which is the realization of the primordial and spontaneous purity of mind (Gethin, 270).

Kagyū Tradition

The Bkah-brgyud-pa link their lineage through Mar-pa (1011-), Mi-la Ras-pa (1040-1123), and sGam-po-pa (1079-1153), started with the Indian yogi Naropa (956-1040) (Gethin, 270). Mar-pa founded a new sect known as the Kagyupa as a result of Naropa's teachings (Bell, *Religion of Tibet*, 1968, 63). It centered on the philosophy of Great Seal or *Mahāmudrā* which Naropa had learnt from Tilopa, an Indian Master, in the tenth century. It continues to be very popular in Tibet today. The Bkah-brgyud-pa gave rise to a number of sub-schools. The term *Bka'-brgyud*, which translates to oral instruction in Buddhism. The lineage of the Bka'-brgyud emphasizes the continuity of oral teachings passed on from master to student (Hoffmann, 140).

Master Mar-pa was born in 1011 A.D. in a district in Southern Tibet and went to Nepal and India for learning. In Nepal a Nepalese Buddhist master Pitherpa taught him Tantras for three years (Roerich, 400). Then another Nepalese master Bendapa took him to the Master Naropa, a great Indian Buddhist scholar of Nalanda University. Marpa received instruction in the Tantras and Sadhanas as well as initiation into Hevajra. Additionally, he studied the *Guhyasamajā* Tantra in western India. He afterward went back to Naropa's hermitage to learn the *Pradīpoddyotana-nama-tika*. He also received a full introduction to the *Mahāmāyā* cycle. He then went back to Tibet. After that Marpa made visits to Nepal and India. After returning to Tibet, he taught his disciples the tantric teachings of *Sambhara*,

Guhyasamāja, Haivajra, Mahāmāyā, and other tantras. These doctrines led to the formation of the Bkah-brgyud-pa Sect. It had two branches, Dvags-po Bka'-brgyud and Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud, and several sub-branches. Dvags-po Bka'-brgyud had significant impact on Tibetan society. Mar-pa transmitted his entire teachings to his four major disciples. Among them, Milarepa was Marpa's main disciple. He is considered to be one of Tibet's most famous yogis and spiritual poets. Milarepa in turn taught them to Gampopa, a great scholar also known as Dvags-po-lha-rje (1079-1153 A.D.). He founded Dvags-po Bka'-brgyud sect and established Sgam-po Monastery in the Dvags-po region which was the first monastery of this sect. Gampopa also had four main disciples and each one founded four major sub-sects.

The most influential sub-sects of Karma Bka'-brgyud, founded by Dus-gsum mkhelen-pa (1110-1193 A.D.). The system of reincarnating Living Buddhas comes up with this sect (Furen and Wenqing, 1984, 54-55). Eminent Tibetan monks who distinguished themselves in the practice of Buddhism were referred to as "Living Buddhas". "Living Buddha" is considered as reincarnation of a previous deceased master. Karmapa, is venerated as Living Buddha. Gampopa's disciple Dus-gsum mkhelen-pa, believed to be the First Karmapa. So far, seventeen incarnations of Karmapa have come. Likewise, Shamarpa, his incarnation considered to be the second-highest ranking after Karmapa in Karma Bka'-brgyud school.

Sakya Tradition

The Sa-skyapa sect was founded by Dkon-mchogrgyal-po (1034-1102 A.D.) in the Grom-chu Valley Southwest of Shigatse (Furen and Wenqing, 53; Gethin, 271). He established the monastery of Sa-skyapa in 1073 A.D (Roerich, 210). Sa-skyapa derives its name grey soil from the color of soil where the first monastery was built (Thondup, 33). Here, he disseminated Lamaist teaching and trained monks. Gradually, Sakya sect developed from this monastery. Even now, Sa-skyapa monasteries are found in grey in color. This sect is closely related with Nyingmapa school and does not enforce celibacy. It was one of the most influential sects in Tibet. A monastic tradition is associated with a specifically Khon family lineage of married yogins who pass on the teachings from father to son or uncle to nephew is a distinctive feature of the Sa-skyapa school (Gethin, 271).

There are five 'great masters' in this sect, Sa-skyapa Pandita is regarded as the most important. The Sa-skyapa-pa's gradual-path 'sutra' teachings, also known as the "Leaving behind the Four Desires," are believed to be given by Manjusri, the *Bodhisattva* of Wisdom, to Kundga snying-po, the second of the five masters:

"If you desire this life, you are not a religious person.

If you desire the round of existence, you have not turned around with conviction.

If you desire benefit for yourself, you do not have the thought of awakening.
If grasping ensues, you do not have the view." (Gethin, 271).

This sect also emphasizes a sutra and tantra teaching known as Path and Fruit (Lam-bras or Lamdre), which is related to the Hevajra tantra. This teaching is credited to Virupa, an Indian tantric yogin who was one of the eighty-four siddhas. Many eminent Tibetan scholars emerged in this sect among whom Sakya-shribhadra is one of them. In the 12th century, Shakya-shribhadra, the great Indian scholar of Vikramashila monastery, arrived in Tibet (Sankrityayan, 1990, 30). He lived there for ten years. Many monks of Sakya monastery learned Buddhist teaching through him and became disciples. Shakya-shribhadra was credited with making the Sakyapa sect influential.

Another important figure was Bu-ston (1290-1364 A.D.). He was renowned Buddhist master, who collected existing Tibetan translations of Buddhist works. He arranged them systematically into two comprehensive groups, called the Bkah-hgyur (the Word of the Buddha) in 100 volumes, and the Bstan-hgyur (the Treatise) in 225 volumes (Bapat, 81; Sankrityayan, 1991, 34) are known as Tibetan Buddhist Canon.

Gelugpa Tradition

Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419), founded Gelugpa tradition (Furen and Wenqing, 81). He was a native of Tsong-kha in Amdo region. At the age of seven, he became a monk of the Bka-gdam-pa. When he was sixteen, he went to the Dbus and Gtsang regions to study Buddhist scriptures, where he made contact with various Lama. Tsong-kha-pa wrote numerous Buddhist texts based on of Bka-gdam-pa, Nyingmapa, Kagyupa and Sakyapa.

The Gelung School emphasized on monastic discipline, the study and practice of *Mādhyamika* thought (Gethin, 271). Gethin further says that its sutra and tantra teachings are centered on Tsong-kha-pa's two main works: The Great Gradual Path (*Lam-rim chen-mo*) the Great Path of Mantra (*sngags-rim chen-mo*), which focuses on the *Kālacakra* and *Guhya-samāja* tantras. 'Lamrim' refers to the stages of the path that lead to the Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom (Thondup, 41).

In Bell's work *Tibet Past and Present*, he writes, "Tsong-kha-pa founded the monastery of Gan-den 'The Joyous', the name being derived from *Ga* (joy). His followers became known as *Ga-luk*, 'The Gan-den Way', but as this seemed to suggest the way of pleasure, a slight change was made, and it became *Ga-luk*, 'The virtuous way'." (96). Ganden Monastery was situated at the east of Tibet. Monastery made a great progress and many students came here to study. They discarded traditional Red Hat of Nyingmapa sect and adopted yellow hat so that this school also referred to as 'Yellow Hat Sect'. In present day,

Gelugpa sect became the most influential sect of the Tibetan Buddhism. The lineages of Dalai Lamas also belong to this school.

In 1577 A.D., the chief of Gelukpa Sonam Gya-tso had arrived Mongolia with the invitation of Mongol chief Al-than-Khan of Quinhai region. There he preached the Teachings of his sect to the Mongol chief. The Mongol leader as well as people in the Quinhai region converted to the Gelukpa. At the same time, Al-than-Khan granted the honorific title of Dalai Lama to Sonam Gyatso. The meaning of 'Dalai' is Ocean and Lama is superior man, which comes to mean omniscience and great authority (Furen and Wenqing, 87). Subsequently, the title of First Dalai Lama went to the hierarchy of Yellow Sect on Gedun Drub, disciple of Tsong-kha-pa and 'Second Dalai Lama' on Gedun Gya-tso. The title of the Third Dalai Lama went to Sonam Gya-tso, who was supposed to be the Living Buddha re-incarnation of Gedun Gya-tso. There have been fourteen Dalai Lamas. The Fifth Dalai Lama is known as a great Dalai Lama and was the first to gain full temporal power of all Tibet as well as to being Grand Lama of Gelugpa School. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is Tenzin Gya-tso, a spiritual and religious leader of the Tibetan people. He was born in 1935, and at the age of two, he was recognized as the incarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama and was enthroned in 1940. Dalai Lamas are venerated as a Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and believed that they come to be born in this world again and again for the welfare of sentient beings. Another most important figure after Dalai Lama is Panchen Lama. His reincarnation considered to be the second-highest position in Gelugpa School (Bajracharya, 118). Within the Gelugpa school, the chosen one should get ordained, be celibate, and practice *Bodhicitta*. Nowadays, Gelugpa School is the most influential sect of the Tibetan Buddhism.

Conclusion

Buddhism is largely based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha. In the reign of Tibet's historic King Srong-btsan-sgam-po of 7th century A.D., Buddhism was introduced to Tibet and numerous Sanskrit texts translated into Tibetan language and script. Buddhism had been flourished during the 8th century A.D., in the reign of King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan and expanded more with the arrival of the well-known Buddhist masters. During this period, the influence of Bon religion was so profound that the teachings of Shantarakshita did not have an impact on the people. However, Padmasambhava's use of magic and tantric spiritual powers impressed the Tibetan people.

After King Khri-srong-Ide-btsan, his disciples patronized Buddhism as well, with higher faith. This is evident from the activities of King Mu-ne-btsan-po and King Ralpa-chan. Mu-ne-btsan-po distributed wealth to his people from the royal funds with the intention of making everyone equally rich. His act leads to him being killed with poison

by members of his own family. Nevertheless, during his reign, he was appeared to have patronized Buddhism. Ral-pa-chan, the great devotee of Buddhism was also killed by his brother Lang Dar-ma, the opponent of Buddhism who tried to eliminate Buddhism from Tibet. After that, Buddhism was in darkness for about 150 years. If one follows the Buddhist teachings the right way, there would not have been a situation of killing. Therefore, more importance should be given to the wisdom of Buddha's teachings. In the 11th century A.D., Indian Buddhist Master Atisha Dipankara visited Tibet and composed numerous Buddhist texts, significantly promoting Buddhism in the country.

Gradually, Buddhism has been divided into various traditions with different beliefs, and practices. Perceptions of the all sects are primarily based on the teachings of the Gautama Buddha. Despite various ups and downs, Buddhism flourished in Tibet with the efforts of kings and famed Buddhist masters. Consequently, a large number of Tibetan texts were collected and divided into two groups, such as Bkah-hgyur, and the Bstan-hgyur, known as Tibetan Buddhist Canonical Literature. These texts are considered authoritative sources for those who are studying Buddhism. Notably, Tibetan Buddhism is well-known all around the world in the present day.

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